

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 09131 250724Z
ACTION OC-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9104

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 9131

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, APOU
SUBJECT: MOSCOW AIR POUCHES OF JUNE 18

REF: (A) MOSCOW 8936, (B) MOSCOW 8848, (C) MOSCOW 8847,
(D) STATE 146594

1. CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING DISCOVERY OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS: ON JUNE 20 A COMMUNICATOR WAS DISPATCHED TO THE AIRPORT CUSTOMS OFFICE TO PICK UP POUCH MATERIAL THAT ARRIVED VIA PAN AM ON JUNE 18. THE AIRPORT CUSTOMS CLERK ON DUTY AT FIRST STATED THE POUCHES WERE NOW IN THE CENTRAL CUSTOMS OFFICE IN MOSCOW. THE COMMUNICATOR INSISTED THAT THE POUCHES BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY. THE CUSTOMS CLERK THEN CHECKED THE ADJACENT ROOM WHERE DIPLOMATIC POUCHES ARE HELD AND FOUND THE POUCHES IN QUESTION AND RELUCTANTLY RELEASED THEM WITHOUT AN AWB. AFTER RETURNING TO THE EMBASSY THE COMMUNICATOR SORTED THE CONTENTS ON THE NINTH FLOOR OPPOSITE THE UNCLASSIFIED MAIL DISTRIBUTION AFTER FIRST REMOVING REGISTERED ITEMS REQUIRING SIGNATURE CONTROL BY C&R. AT ONE POINT IN HIS ACTIVITY HE RECALLS REACHING INTO THE BOTTOM OF AN UNCLASSIFIED POUCH AND PULLING OUT A NUMBER OF ITMES, AMONG WHICH WERE A VOLUMINOUS STACK OF PAPERS, UNEVELOPED. HE OBSERVED THAT THE FIRST DOCUMENT WAS UNCLASSIFIED. HE THOUGHT IT STRANGE THAT AN UNENVELOPED STACK OF PAPERS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN AN AIR POUCH. HE THEN PLACED THE STACK IN THE C&R DISTRIBUTION BOX INTENDING TO CARRY THEM BACK TO C&R FOR INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION, SINCE THEY WERE UNENVELOPED. HE
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RECALLS TAKING THEM TO CRU AFTER COMPLETING THE DISTRIBUTION. CLOSER SCRUTINY OF DOCUMENTS REVEALED THE CLASSIFIED NATURE OF CERTAIN ITEMS. UPON BEING QUESTIONED BY CRO AND RSO CONCERNING DISCOVERY OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS IN THE UNCLASSIFIED POUCH BE BELIEVED HE HAD PULLED SOME UNENVELOPED DOCUMENTS OUT OF THE BOTTOM OF AN UNCLASSIFIED POUCH, BUT DUE TO VOLUME OF POUCH MAIL PROCESSED COULD NOT STATE SO UNEQUIVOCALLY.

2. IT WAS HOPED THAT BY CONDUCTING REVIEW OF REGISTRY NUMBERS AND FURTHER INQUIRY IN DEPARTMENT ORIGIN OF PAPERS COULD BE DETERMINED. AFTER DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR TOON IT WAS ESTABLISHED THAT THESE PAPERS HAD BEEN LEFT BY HIM AT EUR/SOV FOR FORWARDING TO MOSCOW. PRIOR TO THE RE-APPEARANCE IN MOSCOW ON THE 20TH, NEITHER AMBASSADOR TOON, HIS SECRETARY NOR HIS AIDE HAD SEEN THE DOCUMENTS.

THE NATURE OF THE DOCUMENTS WOULD INDICATE THAT IF THEY HAD ARRIVED IN MOSCOW EARLIER ONE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS WOULD HAVE SEEN THEM; AS MATERIALS WOULD HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED TO THE AMBASSADOR, C&R WOULD HAVE DISTRIBUTED THEM DIRECTLY TO THE AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE UNOPENED.

3. POSSIBILITY THAT CLASSIFIED MATERIAL IN QUESTION COULD HAVE GOTTEN INTO UNCLASSIFIED DISTRIBUTION BOX AREAS IS CONCEIVABLE BUT HIGHLY UNLIKELY. POSSIBILITY THAT THIS SAME MATERIAL COULD HAVE BECOME MIXED WITH UNCLASSIFIED (REFTEL D, PARA B) IS NOT LIKELY BASED ON TESTIMONY OF C&R CLERK.

4. CONCERNING REFTEL D, PARA C COMMENTS, IF MATERIAL WAS COMPROMISED, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE IN SOVIETS BEST INTEREST TO KEEP US IGNORANT OF THEIR SUCCESS. IF ONE TAKES INTO ACCOUNT LIMITED TIME SOVIETS HAD TO WORK WITH POUCH (APPROXIMATELY TWO DAYS), THIS MIGHT EXPLAIN A HASTY OPENING AND CONVMMITANT INABILITY TO EFFECT SUCCESSFUL RESEALING. ONE CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY

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OF THE SOVIETS FORGETTING TO RE-ENVELOPE THE PAPERS. AT THIS POINT NO SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION EVIDENT FOR APPEARANCE OF DOCUMENTS IN POUCH UNENVELOPED. POSSIBILITY ALSO EXISTS THAT OUTER WRAPPER WAS PROPERLY MARKED, ALBEIT INCONSPICUOUSLY, BUT WAS NOT REGISTERED. ANOTHER FACTOR CONTRIBUTINT TO POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET COMPROMISE IS FACT THAT PAPERS WERE FOUND IN A NEAT, ORDERLY FASHION AT BOTTOM OF POUCH. EVEN BUSINESS CARDS WERE NEATLY IN PLACE. TRANS-ATLANTIC TRAVEL IS NOT CONDUCTIVE TO RETAINING THE ORDERLINESS OF SUCH A STACK OF PAPERS NOT IN ENVELOPE.

5. UNFORTUNATELY NO DETAILED INSPECTION WAS PERFORMED OF ANY UNCLASSIFIED POUCHES. SOME SEALS, HOWEVER, WERE RETAINED AND IF REQUESTED WILL BE FORWARDED TO DEPARTMENT FOR ANALYSIS. ANY EXAMINATION WHICH COULD BE PERFORMED ON POUCH BAG WOULD NOT BE CONCLUSIVE. IN SEPTEMBER

1976 IT WAS DETERMINED THROUGH ANALYSIS OF LETTER ADDRESS TO FORMER AMBASSADOR WALTER STOESEL THAT SOVIETS HAD SURREPTITIOUSLY ENTERED OUR UNCLASSIFIED POUCH. HOWEVER, INSPECTION OF THESE SAME POUCHES DID NOT REVEAL ANY ATTEMPTED ENTRY. (SEE 76 STATE 296487, SY CHANNEL). MOREOVER, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT SOVIETS HAVE CAPABILITY TO DUPLICATE SEALS; OR THEY COULD ENTER THROUGH STITCHERY.

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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